

Talking Points for Parents and Teachers Regarding Optional Masking
February 2022

Parents and Teachers should remain neutral and non-judgmental when discussing mask wearing with children. The way in which students feel about masking versus unmasking is greatly influenced by how the adults in their lives express their thoughts on this issue. Parents and Teachers should cultivate an environment of acceptance, understanding, respect, and compassion for others who have differing views regarding masking and unmasking. This will help decrease students' stress and anxiety and promote a positive climate for all.

Sample script for adults to discuss with students:

"Every family has different circumstances for choosing to wear or not wear a mask, and that is okay. Each family must decide based on their personal family needs. It is important to respect and understand that each family's decision is what is best for them and that it is okay if it is different from another family."

Sample STUDENT script:

"I am more comfortable wearing/not wearing a mask"

Prior to masking becoming optional, parents and teachers can speak with students that some students and teachers may continue to wear masks in school while others will not. Explaining that either choice is okay will help eliminate stress and tension students may otherwise experience around this issue.

Sample script for adults to discuss with students:

"Tomorrow, some students and teachers will wear masks to school, and some will not. The choice of wearing a mask or not, is up to each family's preference based on their individual family circumstances."

Parents and Teachers can explain to students that the decision to wear a mask or not, is an individual and personal decision for each family. There is no right or wrong decision as to whether a student chooses to wear a mask.

There may be several reasons that determine whether a student wears or does not wear a mask including:

- personal health concerns
- health concerns of a family member
- individual student learning, social or emotional needs
- individual comfort level

Parents and teachers should speak to children about other safety measures students can follow in school whether the students wear a mask or not, such as, social distancing, increased hand washing, etc.

FWM's staff will also have the option to wear a mask or not in school. Like students and families, staff decisions to wear masks or not, are personal choices made in the best interest of each individual staff member and his or her family, and should be respected as such.